

CONTEXT

- Already vulnerable to climate shocks and other risks related to structural poverty and chronic violence, El Salvador experienced a number of emergencies in 2020 that exacerbated humanitarian needs across the country. As of August 2021, the UN estimated that approximately 1.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, representing a more than 160 percent increase compared to the 643,000 people in need in early 2020.
- The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season was the most active season ever recorded, with 30 named storms and 13 hurricanes, including six major hurricanes. In particular, tropical storms Amanda and Cristobal in May–June 2020 and hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020 negatively affected the livelihoods of nearly 60 percent of households in El Salvador. These crises contributed to increased humanitarian needs in El Salvador, particularly among vulnerable populations such as women; children; indigenous people; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex individuals; and people with disabilities.
- Since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020, limited health services and insufficient availability of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure have challenged efforts to control transmission, while the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic have exacerbated existing health, food, nutrition, protection, and WASH needs, increasing the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance across the country. As of August 2021, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) projected that up to 490,000 people in El Salvador were experiencing food insecurity and the UN estimated 700,000 people lacked access to safe drinking water.
- The U.S. Government temporarily suspended humanitarian assistance activities in El Salvador between March 2019 and May 2020. During this period, the number of people in need increased dramatically. USAID/BHA reinitiated humanitarian assistance programming in El Salvador in June 2020, leading to the resumption of food assistance operations and other response activities to support vulnerable households in the country.
- On March 15, 2021, Chargé d'Affaires Brendan O'Brien issued a disaster declaration for El Salvador in response to food insecurity in the country, exacerbated by the compounding impact of natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and recurrent drought.



ASSISTANCE

- USAID/BHA provided funding to respond to humanitarian needs among affected communities after Tropical Storm Amanda caused widespread floods and landslides and disrupted agricultural production. With USAID/BHA support, relief partners offered health, shelter, and WASH support, as well as multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA), in the country's Chalatenango, La Libertad, and San Salvador departments.

- In response to worsening food insecurity, USAID/BHA supports the delivery of cash assistance for food to meet emergency food needs and prevent and address malnutrition among food-insecure households. USAID/BHA food assistance aims to address increased needs in a manner that improves food consumption patterns and increases dietary diversity. Additionally, USAID/BHA partners are supporting smallholder farmers and other agriculture-dependent households to ensure appropriate and timely inputs for planting and growing seasons—such as farming tools, fertilizer, and seeds—with the goal of improving food security. USAID/BHA partners also provide training on climate-smart farming practices such as drip irrigation, diversification of crops, and soil management to increase crop production and build resilience to future climate shocks.



USAID/BHA staff speak to beneficiaries during registration for MPCA programming in Usulután Department, El Salvador. *Photo Credit: World Vision El Salvador*

- USAID/BHA protection partners in El Salvador provide psychosocial support, learning and recreational opportunities for children, and case management and referral services for women and girls at high risk of exploitation, gender-based violence, and other forms of abuse. USAID/BHA also funds child protection activities, including coordination, advocacy, and response efforts.
- To bolster COVID-19 preparedness and response in El Salvador, USAID/BHA provides funding for health, protection, and WASH activities, including technical support for COVID-19 case management and infection prevention and control in health facilities. Additionally, USAID/BHA is supporting health care facilities by repairing physical infrastructure, distributing essential supplies and equipment, and training health care personnel.
- USAID/BHA partners are supporting vulnerable households to restore livelihoods, increase financial resilience, and mitigate the impact of future shocks. Program activities include financial literacy courses, establishing community savings and loans groups, and restarting and expanding income-generating activities. Moreover, USAID/BHA also provides MPCA to help households meet basic needs such as food costs and rent.
- USAID/BHA funds early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) activities that focus on building long-term resilience and response capacity in El Salvador's La Union, San Miguel, San Vicente, and Usulután departments. USAID/BHA partners are increasing disaster resilience by bolstering the technical capacity of local governments and communities to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to natural hazards, including earthquakes. USAID/BHA is also supporting efforts to increase food security among drought-affected households by training smallholder farmers to apply sustainable agriculture practices, diversify agricultural income, and strengthen local management of water sources.

USAID/BHA Funding in El Salvador ¹			
	Emergency	ER4	TOTAL
FY 2020	\$9,098,654	\$3,000,000	\$12,098,654
FY 2021	\$16,109,138	\$530,000	\$16,639,138

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2021. Totals include estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.